



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

May 15, 2013

TO: Councilmember Richard Conlin

FROM: Diane Sugimura

SUBJECT: Suggestions for Comprehensive Plan annual amendment cycle

The Department of Planning and Development has identified a number of topics that we believe should be considered in the 2013-2014 annual Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle. Even though we are in the process of conducting the state-mandated major review and update of the Plan and aiming for adoption of wide-reaching Plan revisions in 2015, the proposals below represent new or revised policy directions that will stand the test of time and are very unlikely to be changed through the major review process.

The suggestions below are still in early stages of formulation as DPD works through particular issues with community groups, and there is not specific language available. However, all of the processes are actively moving forward on these topics, and we believe that having complete language available in November when the Mayor sends recommended amendments to Council will afford the broader public, beyond these projects' stakeholders, sufficient opportunity to review and comment prior to Council action. For amendments stemming from community processes, moving the amendments forward now can help move more quickly to implementation steps, making more efficient use of community volunteers' time.

The numbered paragraphs in the description of each topic below correspond to the questions included in the Council's amendment application form.

A. University District Urban Center

As you know, DPD is currently working with the community in the University District to develop an area study for the neighborhood. From our conversations with the community so far, we have identified several possible types of changes we want to continue pursuing.

1. At this time, we do not have specific policy language to recommend, but the following points help describe the general purpose and direction of likely amendments:
 - Allow increased heights, especially in the core of the neighborhood. For example, amend UC-P2, which calls for heights up to 65' south of NE 43rd St. Based on community feedback, it's likely that DPD will recommend zoning for higher midrise and some highrise in this area.
 - Remove reference to specific subareas (e.g., University Gardens) which aren't likely to play a major role in the future growth of the neighborhood.
 - Remove the confusing and seemingly unnecessary policy UC-P4: "These goals and policies of the UCUC Neighborhood Plan are not intended to change the



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policy basis for consideration of rezones proposed after adoption of these goals and policies.”

- Update or eliminate all figures since they no longer correspond to long-range planning ideas in the neighborhood.
 - Add references to the potential suitability of highrise development and incentive zoning?
 - Rework open space references to focus on the community’s desire for a park or plaza in the core of the neighborhood.
 - Add reference(s) to increasing the diversity and density of jobs in the neighborhood; existing goals and policies are all focused on residential growth and amenities.
 - Add updated language to support transportation choices, such as a bike plan, pedestrian facilities, transit coordination.
 - Extend Urban Center boundary northward near University Way toward Ravenna Boulevard.
2. The City adopted the University District Neighborhood Plan in 1998. The ongoing effort between the City and the community is an opportunity to update some of the policies in that original plan.
 3. The neighborhood plan helps guide key City decisions about the physical development of the neighborhood. The updated neighborhood plan’s inclusion in the Comp Plan will continue to provide guidance for development in the area.
 4. The amendments will provide a benefit to the community by recognizing the current neighborhood conditions and the neighborhood’s desires, which would be reflected in policies that will help guide actions by both City departments and private developers.
 5. The recommendations will be derived from extensive community engagement that considered the existing vision, goals and policies and will reflect revisions to some of those earlier statements.
 6. The suggestion is based on our work with the community so far, and the final recommendations will be reviewed by the community prior to Council review.

B. Arena-related

The memorandum of understanding among the City, King County and ArenaCo called for two studies of land use issues in the vicinity of the proposed basketball arena. The MOU directs one of the studies to “...evaluate the necessary policies ... to protect maritime and industrial uses and reinforce the role of the manufacturing/industrial center (M/IC) as a manufacturing and industrial sanctuary.” The second study, referred to as the stadium district study, is reevaluating the effectiveness of the existing Stadium Transition Area Overlay District (STAOD) and the existing Comprehensive Plan policies for that area. It is expected that each of the two related studies could result in amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. While the two studies are ongoing with draft recommendations scheduled for July 2013, the types of policy changes that could be pursued based on work to date are summarized in #1 below.

1. Potential changes that could emerge from the industrial land study include policies that restrict removal of land from the Duwamish M/IC or that further discourage development of non-industrial uses in the M/IC. One outcome of the stadium area will be an evaluation of that area’s inclusion within the Duwamish M/IC and a recommendation about one of the following policy approaches: Continuing to use a

zoning overlay with stronger guiding policy in the Area Specific Land Uses section of the Comprehensive Plan; removing the area from the M/IC and adding it to the Downtown Urban Center, with extension and enhancement of Downtown Urban Center land use policies for the area; or removing it from the M/IC and adding policies that establish it as its own unique category of place.

2. The Plan includes the stadium area in the Duwamish M/IC and designates that land for industrial uses. The Plan also contains several policies that limit uses in the M/IC and on industrially zoned property to industrial uses. The recently adopted Container Port Element of the Plan further strengthened the concept of land use compatibility near Port facilities.
3. The two studies will produce recommendations specifically about the use of land in the M/IC and in the stadium area, for which the Comp Plan currently establishes the relevant policies. The schedule calls for both studies to produce draft recommendations in July of this year, with the goal of having final recommendations available in time for the executive recommendations in the fall.
4. The recommendations will further strengthen the City's commitment to restricting uses in the M/IC and will help formulate a more particular concept for the future of the stadium area.
5. Recommendations for both of these topics are being developed with the help of advisory committees that include people with professional interests in the future of these areas.
6. Once the draft recommendations are published, DPD will solicit comments from the broader public, beyond the advisory committees.

C. Ballard/Interbay

DPD has initiated a land-use study of an approximately 3-mile corridor along Elliott Avenue W and 15th Avenue NW from Interbay to Ballard. The purpose is to develop a vision for the lands close to this heavily travelled, multi-functional route.

1. So far in this study, DPD has identified one possible amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, and that is a change to the Future Land Use Map that would remove a small land area along 16th Ave. W. from the M/IC and change the designation from "industrial" to "mixed-use commercial."
2. The land that would be affected by this amendment is currently designated by the Comprehensive Plan as part of the Ballard Interbay Manufacturing/Industrial Center and for industrial uses.
3. Designating future uses of land is one of the primary purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the designating of M/ICs is a tool the City has chosen to use for that purpose. Because development regulations, including zoning, need to be consistent with the Plan, when the City's desired outcome for an area changes, it is necessary to provide the policy direction for that change in the Plan. DPD has been working with the community to analyze conditions in the area and to develop recommendations about possible changes and expects to have a final recommendation prepared in time for Council consideration as part of this year's amendment cycle.
4. The ultimate outcome could be redevelopment of the parcels covered by the recommendation that would produce more commercial uses that could occur under the current designation, and could include residential uses that are not permitted today.

5. Community representatives, including stakeholders in BINMIC are participating in discussions with DPD about the future of the entire corridor and are reviewing potential recommendations for changes to Future Land Use Map designations.
6. While we are not prepared to make final recommendations at this time, discussions so far with the community appear to support this type of change.

D. Central Area Neighborhood Plan

DPD is working with the community around 23rd Ave. to update portions of the Central Area Action Plan, and we anticipate that process will generate amendments to the Central Area Neighborhood Plan in the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Potential Comprehensive Plan amendments include updating and clarifying goals and policies to reflect the current context and changed conditions in the neighborhood. Recommended amendments could also include changes to the Future Land Use Map as this work identifies locations where zoning changes could leverage public and private investment, particularly at the key nodes of 23rd at Union, Cherry and Jackson.
2. The Central Area Neighborhood Plan was adopted into the Comp Plan in 1998. The neighborhood's goals and policies for guiding growth and change may need to be refreshed, based on physical changes that have occurred in the neighborhood and on possible new visions current residents may have for the neighborhood.
3. The City has determined that the Comp Plan is the appropriate vehicle for conveying the growth goals for all the neighborhood planning areas. DPD has begun research and outreach to the community to discuss possible updates to the neighborhood vision and neighborhood plan. At this time, we anticipate having final recommendations in time to be part of Council's consideration of this year's amendments.
4. Outcomes from amending the neighborhood plan policies in the Comp Plan include renewed interest from the community in shaping the future of the area and new focus for that future that takes into account changes over the past 15 years, plus the aspirations of the current community.
5. The proposed changes would be a new version of the community vision, based on ongoing discussions between City staff and the community.
6. The recommendations DPD will forward in the fall of 2013 will be the product of an inclusive process of community engagement intended to understand and document directions that will have support of the community.

If you have questions about these suggestions, please contact Tom Hauger of my staff at 684-8380 or at tom.hauger@seattle.gov.